

ensure that we are doing everything we can to preserve our rule of law.

Mr. Speaker, I implore this administration to reinstate President Trump's effective and commonsense border policies to get the Biden border crisis under control.

SUPPORTING UCLA'S QUARTER IN WASHINGTON PROGRAM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. BARRAGÁN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. BARRAGÁN. Mr. Speaker, as a young college student, I remember coming to Washington, D.C., to work at the White House.

I was so inspired that, in 1999, I returned to D.C. through UCLA's Quarter in Washington Program. It was known as the CAPPP program, which stands for the Center of American Politics and Public Policy.

This time, my internship experience was very different. The UCLA's CAPPP program offered something unique, setting it apart from most programs that focus only on internships. It had a required research seminar that introduced me to serious original social research and writing. There is no doubt that this program honed my skill set and challenged me with a major research project.

At UCLA, the classes were so big that I did not have a similar opportunity on campus. The program engaged and encouraged me to seriously explore policy questions of interest to me in a disciplined way.

In fact, my research was on the issue of racial disparities in public health, a top priority of mine in Congress today.

The rewards I derived from UCLA's CAPPP Quarter in Washington program have been shared by many others who have benefited. I have learned that since my time in the program, CAPPP has brought ever more diverse cohorts of students, especially women and students of color. CAPPP demonstrated that top universities like UCLA can be competitive, excellent, and diverse at the same time.

Every May, UCLA hosts Undergraduate Research Week in its famed Pauley Pavilion. Over the past several years, CAPPP Quarter in Washington students have distinguished themselves, winning awards such as Dean's Prizes and UCLA's coveted Library Prize.

The recent director, a former UCLA professor of mine, Professor James Desveaux, said that more students from this program—2,500 miles from Westwood—have participated in UCLA's Undergraduate Research Conference than from any other program or department in the social sciences or humanities.

After graduation, CAPPP's alumni have gone on to remarkable accomplishments. Just a few examples of CAPPP alumni:

The top applicant to Yale Law School in 2018, now an editor at the Yale Law Journal.

The daughter of Nigerian immigrants who grew up in low-income housing in Los Angeles was an English major at UCLA with zero training in the social sciences until the CAPPP program in Washington. Because of her research in Washington, she gained admission to the prestigious Ph.D. program at Harvard's Chan School of Public Health in 2020.

Zachary Baron, oversight counsel for the House Committee on Ways and Means in this very Chamber.

Addar Levi, the Deputy General Counsel for the U.S. Treasury Department.

The former deputy city attorney for San Francisco.

And the list goes on and on.

This program taught us critical thinking and research skills that have transformed our lives and set us up to make a real difference in the world.

As an alumna, I join the UCLA CAPPP alumni group on Facebook. A few weeks ago, as I was reading my news feed, I got some stunning news: UCLA's CAPPP program has been dismantled.

I read the former director's farewell letter. The decision had nothing to do with COVID or funding shortages. The decision was made by a handful of administrators who believe that having a research requirement as part of UCLA's internship program in Washington is unnecessary. Students can do research on the campus, they insisted.

For 31 years, UCLA's CAPPP program demonstrated success. There was always high demand from its students wanting to engage in research while interning in Washington. Why deny them this opportunity? After all, aren't research universities supposed to be about teaching and research?

As a product of UCLA's CAPPP program, I know its value firsthand. I believe the skills I learned and the research I conducted had a role in getting me where I am today.

It truly saddens me to learn the program is coming to an end. This seems contrary to the mission of the number one public research university. I hope that UCLA will reconsider and give students the opportunity to grow from this unique undergraduate opportunity.

RECOGNIZING AUSTIN SKERO UPON HIS RETIREMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TONY GONZALES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Del Rio Border Patrol Sector Chief Austin Skero, who is retiring from Border Patrol at the end of July after a more than 30-year career in law enforcement.

Chief Skero has honorably served 26 years with Customs and Border Protection, beginning his career in 1995 in the Rio Grande Valley sector. Throughout his time with CBP, he has served Bor-

der Patrol in various roles across the Nation, from Washington, D.C., to Grand Forks, North Dakota.

Chief Skero has led the Del Rio sector as chief since July 2020. He oversees 250 miles of the U.S.-Mexico border, supervising 2,000 Border Patrol employees, 9 CBP stations, and 5 traffic checkpoints, and supporting 47 counties in Texas.

Chief Skero's mission as sector chief has been especially challenging this year. Del Rio currently is the eye of the storm as we tackle this southern border crisis. Over the last year, Chief Skero has led Del Rio Border Patrol agents through one of the largest spikes in migrant traffic in United States history.

This has been no easy task. Del Rio is the second most trafficked sector on the U.S.-Mexico border. Agents are apprehending an average of a thousand migrants per day, some who surrender willingly and others who try their hardest to avoid being caught.

Last month alone, Chief Skero's sector saw over 30,000 migrant apprehensions, a 700 percent increase from the previous year. In Del Rio, over 700 human smuggling cases have been prosecuted, and sex offender apprehensions are up 1,400 percent.

Apprehensions on trains in Uvalde are up 900 percent, and it is estimated that cartels make \$25 million a week in the Del Rio sector alone simply by trafficking people.

When agents are not in the field securing our borders, their dedicated work to ensure our migrants are protected has not gone unnoticed. Using the sector's limited resources to deal with many dimensions of the crisis has shown exemplary leadership from Chief Skero. Chief Skero has met and surpassed those expectations.

He has had the responsibility of briefing political figures from every corner of the Nation and every party on what is happening at our southern border.

I am incredibly grateful for Chief Skero's leadership, especially during this historic and difficult time for our border communities and our Border Patrol agents. His hard work and commitment have not gone unnoticed.

Chief Skero has received several awards and commendations throughout his career, including Border Patrol's highest award for heroism and valor, the Newton-Azrak Award. While we will miss his direction and guidance, I know his retirement is more than well-earned.

Chief Skero has lived a life driven by service to our community. The Del Rio border sector, our border communities, Texas, and our country are safer because of his leadership and work at the southern border.

Angel and I wish him and his wife, Chandra, all the best as they enter this next phase of their life.

I thank Chief Skero personally for all the direction and guidance he has given in this very difficult time. He has been at the forefront of this effort, at the

forefront of this storm, and I am so grateful for the Border Patrol leading this effort.

Mr. Speaker, I wish Chief Skero a wonderful retirement. It is well-deserved.

ENDING CHILD LABOR IN COCOA AND CHOCOLATE INDUSTRY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. QUIGLEY) for 5 minutes.

Mr. QUIGLEY. Mr. Speaker, it is time to discuss the steps we must take to end child labor in the cocoa and chocolate industry.

This issue was brought to my attention by the students at Bell Elementary School in Chicago. Through the guidance of their teacher, Mr. Barash, these students learned the disturbing relationship between child labor and chocolate production.

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During my visit with their class, they shared with me their concern for children who are forced into child labor in this industry. Some of these children are sold to traffickers or farm owners or are abducted only to be taken to cocoa farms for work. Some do not see their families again for years—some never again.

Most children in the industry begin their days before the sun rises and end it long after the sun sets. They are forced to wield dangerous machetes while climbing up and down trees to cut down bean pods. Then they must carry the pods in sacks weighing more than 100 pounds through the forest. If the children don't work fast enough, the farm owners beat them. When they are finally able to rest, they must sleep on wooden planks in small, windowless buildings with little or no access to clean water.

Many of these children will never attend school or receive an education. The passionate elementary schoolers who told me about this made the compelling case that we must eradicate child labor from this industry and make sure these children are no longer forced into dangerous, unlawful working conditions.

How can we justify all of this for the sake of chocolate?

I am not the first Member of this body to be concerned about these practices. This fight was first taken up in Congress by former Representative Eliot Engel of New York who worked to establish a labeling standard to indicate on chocolate products that no child labor had been used in its production.

While this effort did not succeed, he was joined by former Senator Tom Harkin to establish what we call the Harkin-Engel Protocol. This protocol was an agreement between governments, chocolate companies, and cocoa producers to eliminate the worst forms of child labor within cocoa production.

While the protocol has been effective, this problem persists. In 2015, 14 years

after the protocol's signing, the Department of Labor reported that more than 2 million children were engaged in child labor in cocoa growing regions of West Africa. Although the chocolate industry made a promise to end child labor almost 20 years ago, today, no company can guarantee their products are free of child labor. While chocolate producers have shown some concern for the lives of these children through dedicated funding to eradicate child labor in their industry, it has simply not been enough.

The three largest chocolate suppliers in the world are not even able to identify the farms where their cocoa is being produced. As Americans, we must recognize that much of the chocolate we enjoy is harvested and produced at the expense of these young children.

We cannot let this continue. Kids should be in schools. Kids should be playing. Kids should be with friends. Kids should be kids.

After speaking with the children at Bell Elementary, I was proud to take the first step in the Labor-HHS and Education appropriations bill by including language to reinvigorate the Department of Labor's role in the international Child Labor Cocoa Coordinating Group and to hold the companies in countries involved accountable for the promises they made almost 20 years ago under the Harkin-Engel Protocol. But there is still much to do.

I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress and Secretary Walsh to bring an end to child labor in the cocoa industry. I also want to acknowledge the amazing 12 and 13 year olds who brought this to my attention and are fighting for children they don't know halfway across the world. Standing with these students and working to further their mission is why I am proud to be a Member of this body: to ensure that students like this have their voices heard by Congress.

Mr. Speaker, I look forward to going back to Chicago and the Bell Elementary students to tell them that Congress is listening.

FOREST MANAGEMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. LAMALFA) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LAMALFA. Mr. Speaker, it has been obvious for years now that we need to rethink our forest management strategies.

2020 was the worst fire season on record for California and much of the West. California alone saw 4.2 million acres of land burned. Currently, there are 85 large fires burning across the West and already 1½ million acres burnt.

Last week the smoke reached all the way to Washington, D.C., causing health advisories for people not to be outside if they either have health issues or for athletic purposes in D.C. and Baltimore. The plume even reached all the way up to New York.

The U.S. Forest Service and the Department of the Interior have identified more than 80 million acres that are overgrown and at a high risk of fire.

As wildfires burn across California and the West, Republicans have several bill proposals before this House that would improve forest management. These bills propose comprehensive solutions to address the declining health of our forests and help prevent catastrophic wildfires by expediting the environmental analysis, reducing frivolous lawsuits, and increasing the pace and scale of management practices.

We have suppressed fires for over 110 years which is okay on the surface, but now most forests are intensely overstocked and overgrown with the fuel that causes the fires because we didn't do the other side of the coin: the harvest work, the treatment, and the removing of materials.

For example, in California most forest types had in the past about 64 trees per acre in the mid-1800s. Now they sit at over 300 trees per acre or more, causing weak trees that are more susceptible to insects and ultimately death because they don't have enough water supply, and so this in itself exacerbates the drought within the forest with all the competition of trees per acre and the death of the trees themselves.

One of my bills, the CLEAR Zones Act, would allow better clearing around power lines. It would allow a wider buffer to prevent trees from falling on the lines and igniting a fire which is what they do. A tree falling into power lines lately was likely the cause of the Dixie fire, currently the largest fire burning in California. So far it has burned right around 200,000 acres in my district, and it is only 22 percent contained.

This is hitting the area north of the Camp fire that burned in 2018. As you might remember from history, Mr. Speaker, it burned the town of Paradise, part of Magalia, Concow, and Yankee Hill, this large area here.

Then following up in 2020 was the North Complex fire. They are burning up against each other basically over history here. And now we have the Dixie fire, as it is known, along with a smaller one called the Fly fire which have burned together. Pretty soon the whole landscape is going to have a history of having burned.

For what reason?

It is because we won't manage the lands. We won't do what needs to be done to put the kind of buffers and the kind of zones in that would help make it easier for the firefighters.

Well, the solutions we do have are: we have proper forest management. We have seen that in this area here, around this current Dixie fire.

The Collins Pine Company based in Chester, California, and a lot of areas in northern California, has done a lot of free work along highways around the community that would be very, very helpful and ultimately will be very helpful towards the type of management that will make us fire-safe.